

Problem

The deforestation, loss of biodiversity and greenhouse gas emissions which result from the unsustainable production of palm oil.

Chester Zoo's mission is Preventing Extinction. We recognise that an ever increasing demand for natural resources is putting tremendous pressure on ecosystems and wildlife globally.

Increased demand for palm oil has caused extensive habitat destruction across South East Asia, and in particular, Indonesia and Malaysia, where around 85% of palm oil is grown.

There is a need for industries globally to commit to fully sustainable palm oil supply chains from the field to the food we consume daily.

Solution

An innovative behaviour change programme that aims to increase demand for sustainable palm oil one community at a time.

In 2012, Chester Zoo made a commitment to increasing demand for sustainable palm oil in the UK, using the zoo brand to create the link that was missing between the public and the industry.

We brought together a UK wide network of partners with the single aim of driving a cultural shift towards deforestation-free sustainable palm.



In 2017, we launched ‘Sustainable Palm Oil Communities’.



The aim was to increase demand for sustainable palm oil through businesses operating within our own city, by using our position in the community to influence change.

Empowerment, and making people an active part of the solution, is at the heart of our approach. By creating a community of like-minded organisations, we saw not only enthusiasm for the project grow, but also amplification of the messages.

Businesses committed to be Sustainable Palm Oil champions were required to put in place a sustainable palm oil policy, switching products from unsustainable sources to certified sustainable sources. We supported their journey by providing resources, advice, and celebration of their achievements, and in 2019 we were able to announce Chester as the **world's first Sustainable Palm Oil City**.

Project expansion and monitoring impact

Cities and towns nationwide are now working with us to take on the initiative in their own area, utilising our resources, skills and knowledge, with EIGHT communities in total now having launched their programmes. The project has been highlighted as conservation solution in the ground-breaking Earthshots documentary, led by Prince William and narrated by Sir David Attenborough.

Our roadmap for future expansion is:

Step 1: to branch out to work with national companies who span the breadth of our SPO Communities across the UK. Our goal is to work with national suppliers for hospitality, consumer goods, cosmetics and animal feed to increase the industries represented within SPO Communities, and continue to increase the number of UK communities.

Step 2: to branch out internationally working with multinational companies and chains, empowering more communities WORLDWIDE to become advocates for sustainable palm oil.

Why should this innovation receive a place in the Innovation Fair at the Sustainable Palm Oil Dialogue?

In order to really change the industry we need to come together in partnership with collaboration across industries. This is a project set up for any organisation within any community to run.

We'd love to take this opportunity to be able to use the network of SPOD to engage more communities worldwide with this campaign.